

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 235797

FROM SAUNDERS FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652:XGDS-2

TAGS:PINR, PARM, MNOL, GT, IS, MX

SUBJECT: ISRAELI ARMS TRANSFERS TO GUATEMALA

REF: YOUR INQUIRY SEPTEMBER 29

SUMMARY: ISRAEL HAS SUPPLIED OVER HALF OF GUATEMALA'S ARMS PURCHASES SINCE 1973, WITH SALES INCLUDING 10 ARAVA TRANSPORT PLANES, 15,000 GALIL ASSAULT RIFLES, AND OTHER GROUND FORCE EQUIPMENT. AT PRESENT, GUATEMALA HAS A MILITARY PURCHASE TEAM IN THE FIELD EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF ACQUIRING SUPERSONIC FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, GROUND TO AIR MISSILES, ARTILLERY, ARMORED CARS, AND GUNBOATS. ISRAEL, HOWEVER, IS ONLY ONE OF MANY SUPPLIERS BEING CONTACTED. THE GUATEMALANS HAVE ALSO DISCUSSED PURCHASES OF ARMS AND
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AMMUNITION WITH ARGENTINA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, BELGIUM, SPAIN, PORTUGAL, FRANCE, WEST GERMANY, ITALY AND TAIWAN.

1. AIRCRAFT: THE US HELPED GUATEMALA TO ACQUIRE ITS FIRST JET AIRCRAFT BY PROVIDING 13 A37B LIGHT ATTACK PLANES UNDER 1971 AND 1973 CONTRACTS. HOWEVER AS TENSIONS IN THE BELIZE DISPUTE ROSE IN 1975, THE US HESITATED TO SUPPLY

SURPLUS C-47 TRANSPORTS TO GUATEMALA. GUATEMALA THEN
TURNED TO ISRAEL TO PURCHASE TEN ARAVA SHORT TAKEOFF AND
LANDING LIGHT TRANSPORTS.

2. US COMPONENTS: MOST MAJOR ISRAELI WEAPONS SYSTEMS
CONTAIN SOME FOREIGN COMPONENTS, WHETHER FROM US OR
WESTERN EUROPEAN EXPORTERS. WHILE THE US IS ONE OF
ISRAEL'S MAJOR SUPPLIERS OF COMPONENTS, AND WE CANNOT
THEREFORE RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF US COMPONENTS IN
SOME ISRAELI EQUIPMENT SOLD TO GUATEMALA, WE HAVE NO
INFORMATION TO INDICATE THAT THIS IS THE CASE.

3. TRANSFERS: SO FAR, ITS ACQUISITIONS FROM ISRAEL
HAVE NOT SUBSTANTIALLY ADDED TO GUATEMALA'S OFFENSIVE
CAPABILITIES, NOR HAVE THEY SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED ARMS
RATIOS IN THE REGION. THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT TRANS-
FERRED TO GUATEMALA FROM ISRAEL FROM 1973 TO 1976
CONSISTS OF: 10 ARAVA TRANSPORT PLANES, 15,000 GALIL
ASSAULT RIFLES, 10 LIGHT ARMORED VEHICLES AND 4 MOBILE
FIELD KITCHENS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO NEW ARMS AGREEMENTS
OR DELIVERIES FROM ISRAEL TO GUATEMALA THUS FAR IN
1977.

4. WE UNDERSTAND SECRETARY WANTS FOREGOING DATA FOR
DISCUSSION WITH MEXICAN FONMIN. HE SHOULD BE AWARE
THAT SOME DATA CAME FROM SENSITIVE SOURCES AND HAS
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PREVIOUSLY BEEN HANDLED NOFORN. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

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Sent Date: 30-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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